



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian

Northern District of New York

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 16, 2012

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CONTACT: Tina Sciocchetti or

Robert P. Storch

PHONE: (518) 431-0247

FAX: (518) 431-0249

## **PHILADELPHIA WOMAN SENTENCED FOR HER ROLE IN IDENTITY THEFT SCHEME THAT REACHED THE CAPITAL DISTRICT**

Albany, New York —United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian, Clifford C. Holly, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Albany Division and Steven Heider, Chief of the Town of Colonie Police Department, announced today that **ANN M. GRICE**, 40, of Philadelphia, PA, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Gary L. Sharpe to 57 months of imprisonment for her involvement in an identity theft ring that targeted elderly women in the Capital District region, and elsewhere.

On October 31, 2011, GRICE pled guilty to four felony offenses: two counts of wire fraud and two counts of aggravated identity theft, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1343 and 1028A, respectively. Judge Sharpe sentenced GRICE to 33 months for the wire fraud and 24 months for the aggravated identity theft counts, three years of supervised release, forfeiture, and full restitution to the victims of the crimes which amounted to \$23,494.67.

At her plea, GRICE admitted that she participated in a so-called “flip, bite, and write” identity theft scheme in which ring members targeted elderly women shopping in grocery stores. Ring members acted in teams, one of which was headed by GRICE’s co-defendant, JOHN WINDLE. Teams traveled to locations where retail stores, usually one that sold groceries, were

located in close proximity to stores where electronics could be purchased, such as Best Buy, Circuit City, or Sears. Acting as a member of WINDLE's team, GRICE distracted the elderly female victim in the store ("the flip"), while WINDLE stole the woman's credit cards ("the bite"). WINDLE then went to his vehicle nearby and, using a laptop and ID printer, made a false identification document (ID) in the victim's name with a picture of GRICE or another ring member traveling with them. The false identification documents that GRICE and WINDLE created included state driver's licenses and United States Armed Forces identification cards. Using the stolen credit cards and fake ID, WINDLE, GRICE and other team members then purchased expensive electronics, miscellaneous merchandise, and gift cards, signing the victim's name to the credit card receipts ("the write"). WINDLE sold some of the fraudulently-obtained electronics to another conspirator, KHURRAM FARID, who in turn sold them on the internet under the name of a phony electronics business, while other proceeds were divided among the team members, including GRICE.

GRICE admitted that she and WINDLE carried out the identity theft scheme in the Capital District region in July 2004, victimizing elderly women and businesses in Latham, Brunswick, Clifton Park, and Wilton, New York. The two conspirators were arrested by the New York State Police in Wappingers Falls, N.Y., after leaving this area and victimizing another elderly woman in a supermarket in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. They were indicted by a federal grand jury in this District on February 16, 2007. GRICE remained at large following indictment, and was arrested in the Philadelphia area on August 25, 2011.

In September 2007, GRICE's co-defendant WINDLE pled guilty to four felony offenses in connection with the scheme. In January 2010, Judge Sharpe sentenced him to a total of 70

months imprisonment, three years of supervised release, forfeiture, and full restitution to the victims of his crimes. Another team leader of the “flip, bite, and write” identity theft ring, NELSON SLAUGHTER, pled guilty before Judge Sharpe to felony offenses in October 2006. SLAUGHTER was sentenced to 73 months imprisonment in May 2008. WINDLE and SLAUGHTER, and others operated the scheme starting in at least 2001, and committed acts throughout the United States, including New York, California, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Virginia, and North Carolina. KHURRAM FARID pled guilty in February 2010, in federal district court in the Central District of California, to conspiracy charges for receiving and reselling on the internet the stolen goods procured by WINDLE and SLAUGHTER. FARID was sentenced to 30 months imprisonment, on June 13, 2011, but fled the country following his sentencing. He remains a fugitive.

The criminal investigation was conducted by the FBI, the Town of Colonie Police Department, the Social Security Administration Office of Inspector General, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, and the New York State Police, and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Tina Sciocchetti of the United States Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of New York and Trial Attorney Nicola J. Mrazek of the Fraud Section of the Criminal Division of the U.S. Department of Justice.

LOCAL CONTACT: Assistant U.S. Attorney Tina Sciocchetti at (518) 431-0247